THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) NABARD has reported that in order to help the poor farmers including small/marginal farmers and below poverty line families, Government of Uttaranchal has been providing interest subsidy for Short Term/Medium Term Agriculture Loans through Cooperatives since 1st May 2005 at the following rates:

Sl. No.	Particulars	Interest Rate w.e.f. 01.05.2005	Share of State Govt"s. burden in terms of %age
1.	Upto Rs. 50,000/-	5.00%	4.00%
2.	Above Rs. 50,000/-	5.50%	5.50%

The scheme was in vogue for the year 2005-06 and it has been extended for the current year also.

Apart from the above Government of India has decided to provide short term loan to farmers at 7% upto a maximum of Rs. 3 lakhs principal amount from Kharif 2006.

(b) and (c) State Government provides seasonal loan for Fertilisers particularly during sowing season through Cooperatives.

Loans to students for higher studies

3247. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have fixed certain annual amount for providing loans to students for higher studies;

(b) if so, the amount so fixed for higher studies to SC and ST students living in hilly and far-flung areas of Uttaranchal in view of their special categories in the society; and

(c) the amount actually provided to such students?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has reported-that it does not capture data on disbursement under education loan to SC and ST students separately. However, as per latest information made available by RBI,

the total amount outstanding under education loan in Uttaranchal was Rs. 53.53 crore in 3825 accounts as on the last reporting Friday of March 2005.

Exemption of mega power projects from custom levies

3248. SHRI JANARADHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether 'Mega Power Projects' are exempted from customs and Central excise levies;

(b) if so, the details with number of Central and State Governments' 'Mega Projects' enjoying such concessions, State-wise;

(c) whether State Government of Karnataka has requested to declare its 500 MW thermal station at Bellary as a 'Mega Project';

(d) if so, the details thereof and Centre's reaction thereto;

(e) whether Government have identified Tadri, Dist. Uttara Kannada, Karnataka, as one of the sites for development of five Ultra Mega Power Projects with 4000 MW and above capacity in the country; and

(f) if so, the details thereof and the present status of the projects?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) Mega Power Projects are fully exempt from customs duty, CVD and additional customs duty. If goods for Mega Power Projects are supplied against International Competitive Bidding (ICB), they are exempted from excise duty.

(b) State-wise statement showing projects certified as mega power projects is enclosed *(See* below).

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) As per information provided by Ministry of Power, Government of Karnataka had requested Government of India to accord mega power projects status to its 500 MW power station at Bellary. As the said project did not meet the minimum threshold qualifying limit as provided in the mega power policy, which is 1000 MW in case of thermal power projects and 500 MW in case of hydel projects, Government was unable to accord mega power project status to the project.